

REMARKS

The specification has been amended for clarity and consistency. More particularly, since the numeral 13 is initially used for the end 13 of starter tube 10, it is no longer used to describe the shoulder 19 of the exhaust tube 12. Since the extension 21 is a single circular feature, it is no longer identified as a pair of extensions 21a and 21b.

Independent claims 24 and 31 have been amended for internal consistency as well as consistency with language of the specification. Dependent claims 14, 16 and 34 have been amended for clarity.

Newly submitted independent claim 48 recites a multi-piece mold which is profiled to form the self-centering structure for the starter tube in the end of the exhaust tube.

Claims 14, 16-18, 23-26, 31-32, 34, and 36-37 (all pending claims) stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,107,979 (Dichter) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,846,746 (Prost). To the extent that this rejection would be applied to claims as presently amended, it is traversed for the reasons following.

Dichter discloses a plunger 35 which is received in the open end of a vial 10, and rollers 30, 31 which are rolled against the outside of the vial to form threads 20 for engaging a cap. There is no suggestion of a multi-piece mold including a pair of side pieces which, when joined, form a cavity which can enclose an end portion of a tube for shaping the tube. The rollers 30, 31, do not form a cavity. Heat for shaping the vial 10 is provided by burners 16; the glass must be softened by heat from the burners 16 before the rollers 30, 31 bear against the glass to form the threads. The vial is then driven to rotate by a rubber roller 15 so that the rollers 30, 31 form the threads.

Prost discloses a bottom mold 1 having an axial opening 2 which receives glass tubes 9 and 10; heat is applied by a burner 19 which is located outside of the mold as shown in

Figure 3. The examiner's conclusion that the glass is heated by a heat source in the mold is incorrect. Even if this were the case, there is no suggestion of two side pieces which form a cavity enclosing an end portion of a tube.

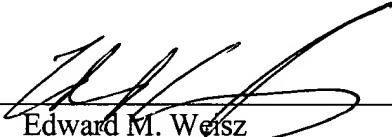
In sum, neither of the references discloses the basic features of applicants' claims, in particular the heat source formed within one of the side pieces. Likewise none of the art of record suggests the multi-piece mold recited in new independent claim 48.

The claims as amended being definite and patentable over the art of record, withdrawal of the rejections and early allowance are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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